

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Huntsman Ranch Family LLC/ Stockwater Pipeline
Proposed Implementation Date:	July , 2013
Proponent:	Huntsman Ranch Family LLC
Location:	Section 3, Township 14 South – Range 1East (Trust is Common Schools)
County:	Beaverhead County

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Huntsman Ranch Family LLC is proposing the installation of an underground 11/4 inch pipeline on state land in section 3 Township 14 South – Range 1 East for the filling of a 4000 gallon stock water tank on private deeded land in Section 10, T14S – R 1E in Beaverhead County. The Huntsman Family Ranch will need to file for a water right on the spring development if the proposal is approved.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:  
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

MT DNRC Archeologist, Patrick Rennie  
Beaverhead County Commissioners  
BLM Dillon Field Office  
NRIS Search  
Skyline Sportsmen's Assoc. Inc.  
Tony Schoonen, Action For Access  
Lorry Thomas, Anaconda Sportsman  
Evan Huntsman, Rancher  
Red Rock Lakes Nat'l Wildlife Refuge  
Craig Fager, Fish Wildlife & Parks  
Matt Jaeger, Fish Wildlife & Parks  
Alan Martinell  
MT Stockgrowers Association  
Moose Creek grazing Association (John Crumley)

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

No other government permits are needed for this proposal. MT DNRC Water Rights Division was consulted for this project and the proposal was approved as presented.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Action Alternative:** Grant Huntsman Ranch Family LLC a Land Use License (LUL) to install a new underground stock water pipe line to gravity feed water from Elk Spring on state land in Sections 3, Township 14 South – Range 1East, to a stock tank on Huntsman deeded land.

**No Action Alternative:** Deny Huntsman Ranch Family LLC a Land Use License to install a new underground stock water pipe line to gravity feed water from Elk Spring on state land in Sections 3, Township 14 South – Range 1East, to a stock tank on deeded land.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered. Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading. Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

#### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The proposed project area is located on alpine glacial deposits and alluvium derived from primarily ancient metamorphic bedrock (quartzites and amphiboles) and volcanic bedrock. Bedrock is common at shallow depth, mainly along ridges and convex slopes. Predominant soils on northerly slopes of 10 to 45%, and ridges are shallow to moderate depth, cobbly sandy loams and cobbly loams. Topsoils are 3-7 inches cobbly loams and sandy loams. These soils are well drained and tend to be droughty. Overall productivity is estimated as low to moderate and cold climate and moisture availability limit plant growth. On concave terrain and swales of 15-35% slope, there are soils with higher clay contents and better site quality. Erosion potential for disturbed soils is moderate, except for steeper side slopes. Soils have a relatively long dry or frozen season. Primary concern for soil productivity is maintaining the shallow topsoils, by minimizing displacement. Southerly aspects with moderate to steep slopes typically have higher rock content soils. These soils are droughtier and include open forest and range sites. The depth of organic rich surface soils is similar to adjacent range sites, and these sites were historically more open stands of trees and native rangelands. Erosion potential for disturbed soils is moderate. Low soil bearing strength and compaction/rutting hazard is a concern in spring/early summer, when soils are wet.

This proposal if done during dry conditions would have very little ground disturbance and affect only a small area. Approximately 900 feet of plowed 1 ¼ inches line will be bored into the ground causing very little soil disturbance. No long term or cumulative effects to soil productivity, compaction or soil erosion would occur if the spring is re-developed and the stock pipeline was installed.

#### 5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

This proposal is located in the watershed of Red Rock Creek in an area commonly referred to as "Alaska Basin." Red Rock Creek drains a watershed area of approximately 22,134 acres. The proposal is located in areas that are drained by several small ephemeral draws and swales that do not contain defined stream channels. These ephemeral drainage features are tributary to several unnamed headwater intermittent and perennial tributaries to Red Rock Creek. Red Rock Creek is a tributary to Upper Red Rock Lake, which feeds the remaining lower Red Rock River system. The Red Rock River drainage is located within the Upper Missouri River Basin.

Downstream beneficial uses in the affected watersheds include: domestic, irrigation, livestock watering, wildlife, and cold-water fisheries. There are several existing water rights for livestock and irrigation uses of surface water located immediately downstream of the proposal.

Elk Spring is already being used to fill stock water tanks found on the Forest Service allotments to the north west of the state ground. The Red Rock Lakes NWR is also in the process of redeveloping a stock water system on the same section to fill two stock water tanks for cattle use. No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated to water quality if this proposal was to move forward and be implemented.

**6. AIR QUALITY:**

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

This proposal would not create any significant air particulate problem and is not located in an area identified as a non attainment zone. No long term or cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated from this proposal.

**7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The proposed project area is located in the northeast end of the Centennial Valley along the southeastern tip of the Gravelly Range. State ownership within the project area is 9,008 acres of which 1,518 acres are forested. Adjacent ownership to the north and east is the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, to the south the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and to the west is private. Lands within the proposed project area occur in open, rolling country with generally broad and gentle ridge tops. Slopes range from 10-50% with an elevation range of 6600 feet to 8200 feet. The area is primarily grassland to the south turning into timbered blocks to the north.

The location of the proposed spring development is comprised of all or parts of 12 sections. Collectively this area is known as the "Alaska Basin grazing leases". The east end of the valley has a number of sensitive species (10) but most of them are located in the sand dunes area of the valley and are at least a couple of miles away from this proposal. The vegetation in the area of the proposal is made up of high elevation native grasses and forbs that will not be affected by this proposal.

No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated from the implementation of this proposal.

**8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

A variety of big game, small mammals, raptors and songbirds potentially use this area. There are no known fish-bearing streams within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project area; however the spring does supply water to Red Rock Creek via ground water.

Because Arctic graying use Red Rock Creek for spawning, Matt Jaeger, Fisheries Biologist for the FWP has requested that if the spring development is allowed the system be shut off when not in use. cursory hydraulic analysis suggests that Red Rock Creek gains about 3 cfs from groundwater in the reach adjacent to Elk Spring. Matt Jaeger wants to be sure that expression of this water isn't disrupted by pumping or piping water away from this reach.

No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated to occur to wildlife, birds or fish if the proposal is implemented.

**9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The proposed project area is situated approximately 1.5 miles west of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. In recent years, grizzly bears have been documented ranging greater distances outside of the Yellowstone Ecosystem. Grizzly bears have occasionally been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project area and the proposed project area lies within a zone considered as occupied habitat

(Interagency Occupied Habitat Map, September 2002). As such, the lands in the general vicinity of Red Rocks Lakes were identified as those where one would reasonably expect to find grizzly bear use occurring during most years. DNRC is not aware of any specific observations of grizzly bears associated with the proposed project area; however, periodic or transient use is possible.

A number of other sensitive species were identified by Natural Heritage Program that are near the project area. These species include Black crowned Night – Heron; White- faced Ibis, Bald eagle, Long-billed Curlew, Franklin's Gull, Forester's Tern, Clark's Nutcracker, Cassin's Finch, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Arctic Grayling, and Hoary Bat. None of the species are located within ½ mile of the proposed project area. Most of the bird species are associated with the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge lakes, streams and the Red Rock River.

No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated to occur to wildlife, birds or fish or sensitive species should this proposal be implemented.

#### 10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

Patrick Rennie the MT DNRC Archeologist was consulted about this project and he didn't have any cultural resource concerns associated with this proposal.

#### 11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The project is located in an isolated area away from any population. No long term or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated from the implementation of this proposal.

#### 12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands for additional environmental resources are required if this proposal is implemented. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to environmental resources should result from this proposal.

#### 13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

The DNRC has a request from the TNC to do a 75 acre burn in section 4, T13S – R2W which is currently being scoped and an EA will be completed on the proposal. If approved the burn would take place in the fall of 2013.

The DNRC, Dillon Unit is also looking at a possible timber permit to finish removing dead and dying timber from bark beetle infestation that has occurred in the Patchtop/Teepee Creek area. There is also an active harvest of Post and Rails taking place in the Teepee Creek drainage that will be completed during the summer and fall of 2013.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered. Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading. Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:  
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The project should not pose any known human health or safety risks if allowed to proceed.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:  
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The project will not alter any current use patterns dealing with agricultural use. Grazing of livestock will continue as before, with possible better utilization of forage and dispersion of livestock over the landscape due to the additional stock tank.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:  
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposal will not alter current employment numbers in the Lima area.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:  
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The project will not alter the current local or state tax base in Beaverhead County or the state of Montana.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:  
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

There are no known impacts or increased demands on government services from this proposed action.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:  
*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

In November 2003, the U.S. Forest Service implemented the Antelope Basin/Elk Lake Allotment Management Plan, directing the management of domestic livestock in the southern Gravelly Mountains. No effects are expected.

No locally adopted environmental plans will be affected by this proposal.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:  
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Persons having legal access to the tracts and possessing a valid state lands recreational use license or FWP conservation license may conduct recreational activities on the tracts. The proposed project would not affect

access for the general public. This area receives considerable hunting pressure during the big game hunting season. Currently there aren't any designated open roads on the state section, but this doesn't stop recreationist from using the area via motorized vehicles. This includes the use of existing roads as well as some of road travel. There is some concern that installing the pipeline will cause additional off road travel to occur. If the pipeline is installed there will be a number of new trails used by pickup trucks, and the dozer plowing the pipeline in. Because the area is easily accessible being open range land the DNRC is concerned that the new trails will be used for recreation after the project was completed. This recreational use could lead to erosion and noxious weeds being introduced to the area reducing productivity and AUM's.

The area is not close to any populated areas so enforcement of the DNRC's recreational use rules is not easily accomplished. Mitigation measures would include putting up signs, barriers and gates to restrict and discourage off road use.

**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

No change in population will result by implementing this proposal.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

This project is congruent with current social structures and mores in Southwestern Montana. Ranching and livestock production are the main economic drivers in Beaverhead County and this is a project to continue to promote these traditional lifestyle.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

The pipeline will be located underground and will not be visible once the disturbed vegetation grows back.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

This proposal will generate approximately \$150.00 every year for the common school trust for the next ten years at that time the license can be renewed.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tim Egan	Date: June 7, 2013
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Grant Huntsman Ranch Family LLC a Land Use License (LUL) to install a new underground stock water pipe line to gravity feed water from Elk Spring on state land in Sections 3, Township 14 South – Range 1East, to a stock tank on Huntsman deeded land

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

The additional water source will enhance grazing distribution and provide a water source for livestock.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐

EIS

☐

More Detailed EA

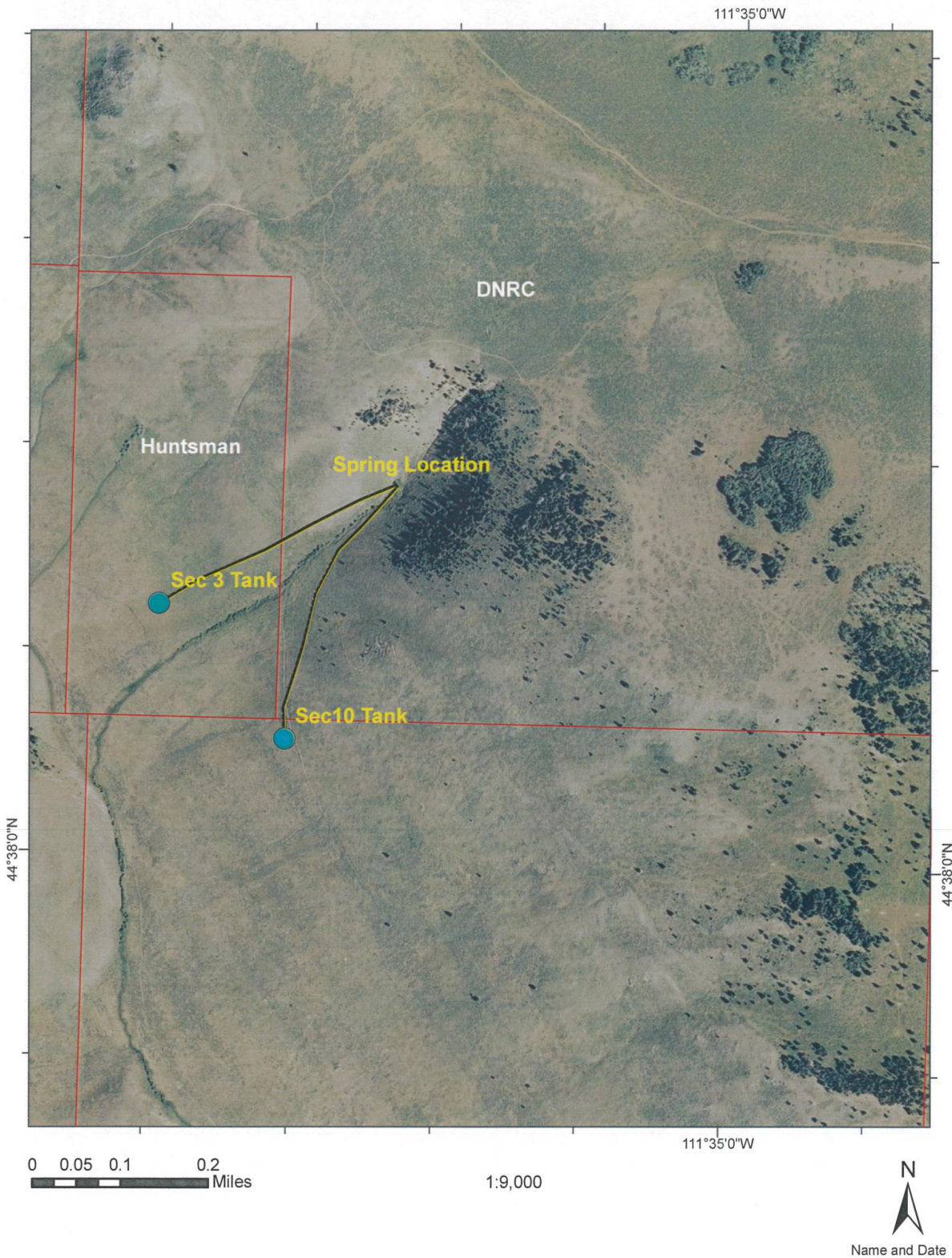
☒

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	<b>Name:</b>	Hoyt Richards
	<b>Title:</b>	Area Manager, Central Land Office
Signature: /s/		Date: June 11, 2013



# Huntsman Spring Development LUL Proposal Section 3, Township 14 South - Range 1 East





**Jim Lincoln Stockwater Pipeline LUL Proposal**  
**Section 16, Township 11South - Range 10 West, MPM**

